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THISTLEDOWN.

BY

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LIKE airy whirls of thistledown,
That summon up before the sight
Of close-kept toilers in the town
Green fields beflowered with delight,
Go, little rhymes ; and let your flight
Hint at sweet-scented winds that blow
Over the meads in summer-tide,
And at the posy songs that grow
On prouder pages, all aglow
With purple pomp, and scarlet pride !



THISTLEDOWN.

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THISTLEDOWN.



LA CRÉPUSCULE.

THE twilight deepened into gloom,
A slender moon slipped up the sky,
And through the purpling lilac bloom
Peered down into the silent room
Where we two loitered—she and I.

Lightly the breeze stole in and stirred
The red-gold tangles of her hair,
And in the distant copse we heard
The cry of some belated bird
Blown softly out upon the air.

THISTLEDOWN.

A spell was on us, strange and sweet—
Too sweet for words, too strange for tears;
Our tender glances dared not meet,
For in our hearts there throbbed and beat
A hundred hopes—a thousand fears.

And so we sat, apart, alone,
With cheeks that burned, we knew not why,
Nor guessed that as the hour crept on
A flash of wings had come and gone,
And Love himself had passed us by.

THISTLEDOWN.

ONNE MY TREWE LOVE—HER NAUGHTIE WAIE.

(After Herrick.)

MY Love has Lippes of Redde Delight,
Where Thrifty Bees doe Sippe & Taste
To Sweet Excess, lest She Sholde Lette
Soe much Rare Honey goe to Waste.

Yett whenne I fain wolde Steal A Kisse,
She Puttes me off & Runnes Awaie,
& now & Thenne, ye Pretty Rogue !
Lookes Backe to Mocke atte my Dismaie.

THISTLEDOWN.

MISTRESSE PEG—HER CRUELIE.

(After Herrick.)

WHENNE Mistresse Peggy Walkes Abroade
Toe Shew her Brave Attyre,
She Setts her Image inne ye Hearte
Of Any yt maie Spye Her,
& Hastening Gallants Bow & Begge
Yt She will Chuse A Squire,
Till Envious Maides Putt onne Disdayne
& Push a-Poutinge by Her.

Butt Mistresse Peg Trippes onne Her Waie
Wth everie Ribbon Flyinge,
& will have None of Fop or Beau
For alle Theyre Prayers & Sighinge.



THISTLEDOWN.

Alack, yt She Sholde Be Soe Colde
(Ye Gallants Joyne inne Cryinge),
Toe Toss Her Head atte everie Swaine
& Give Him harsh Denyinge !

THISTLEDOWN.

AU VOLEUR! AU VOLEUR!

BOY Cupid furled his dainty wings,
And spent with wanton glee
He laid him down to doze and dream
Beneath the greenwood tree.

Miss Julia, singing as she went,
Passed by that way and spied
The rosy traitor fast asleep,
His idle bow beside.

With mischief twinkling in her eye,
She bent her down and kissed
His lips and left a posy in
His pink and dimpled fist,

THISTLEDOWN.

Then tripped away ; but first she took
 The pretty gilded toy
That makes such mischief in the hands
 Of Venus' roguish boy.

Now Love bereft bewails his loss
 The wide green world around,
While Julia laughs and well employs
 Her ill-got power to wound.

THISTLEDOWN.

CONTRE-TEMPS.

A RUFFLED gallant, trim and trig,
With silver buckles on his shoon,
Went idly down the dusty road,
And trolled, the while, a lover's tune.

Sweet Mistress Peg, across the way,
Sat at her lattice peeping thro',
And in her silly heart made sure
She saw a suitor come to woo.

So up she rose and decked her out
All in her crimson padesoy,
And on her dainty dimpled chin
Set straight the patch and laughed for joy.



THISTLEDOWN.

Yet when she looked a second time,
Alack, she sighed and looked no more,
But railed at Fate and overturned
Her tambour frame upon the floor,

For in the grassy mead beyond,
Behold, the faithless cavalier
Made merry with the miller's maid
And whispered secrets in her ear.

THISTLEDOWN.

IN APRIL.

O THE day was dark and the day was cold,
And the day was dull and dreary,
And the wind swept down from the withered wold,
And the springtime lurked in the dingy mould
Till the world and I were weary ;
And I wandered to and I wandered fro,
And I wandered into the meadow,
Till I stood where the early violets grow
Till a step came up from the path below,
And he told me—my life broke into glow,
And the chill fled and the shadow !

O the breezes came and the breezes went,
And merrily danced beside us,

THISTLEDOWN.

Around and about us the blue sky bent,
And the sunshine laughed as if it meant
 To kiss since it could not chide us.
And the birds sang here and the birds sang there,
 And the birds sang all together,
For the bliss that was mine spread everywhere,
And the world grew green and the world grew fair,
And the breath of blossoms hung in the air,
 And lo ! it was April weather!

THISTLEDOWN.

BETTY.

BETTY'S the veriest coquette
That since the days of Circe
Has made a trade of breaking hearts
And steeled her own to mercy;
For when I wooed her last July
With hot, impassioned phrases,
She laughed a saucy "No!" and fell
To pelting me with daisies.

To-day she promised to be mine,
And owned with pretty smiling
To all the snares her art had laid
For me and my beguiling.

THISTLEDOWN.

And—Cupid, what think you of this?—
She vows her former flouting
Was but a trick to prove me true,
And end her woman's doubting!

THISTLEDOWN.

MY LADY'S PAGE.

(Rondeau.)

MY Lady's page hath purple eyes
Wherein a drowsy passion lies,
And lips whose sweetness doth eclipse
Such honey-dew as Cupid sips
From chalice-buds in Paradise.

Lightly among her train he trips,
And blown from pinky finger-tips,
Her kiss proclaims him where it flies
My Lady's page.



THISTLEDOWN.

Some sprite hath taught him that he slips
Into her heart and therefrom strips
 The hoarded sweets with bold emprise.
What wonder then that great and wise
Do envy where he sings and skips—
 My Lady's page.

THISTLEDOWN.

ONNE YE HILL-TOPPE.

After Herrick.

'TWAS onne ye Toppe of Harley Hill,
& I, yt Begged A Posy,
From my Trewe Love, Looked uppe & Spyed
Ye Dimpled Mayde alle Rosy.

She Pluckt ye Flowre yt I Besought
& Tossed to me wth Laughter,
Thenne Fledde awaie across ye Fieldes
Till I inne Haste Ranne After,
& from ye Redde Rose of Her Lippes,
Yt She hadde fayne Denyed me,
Snacht xx Kisses Softe & Sweete,
& soe She Satisfyed me.

THISTLEDOWN.

O BONNY BEE.

O LUSTY, brown, gold-belted bee,
Thou that hast sought the honeyed cell
Of amaranth or asphodel
To suck thy fill of spicery—
Thou happy vagabond, make haste
And hide thee in the lotus-bloom,
That droops upon her breast to see
More ivory whiteness than its own.

There is a palace faint with rich perfume
Where, till the summer day is flown,
Thou shalt hold revelry and taste
Such nectar as must surfeit thee;

THISTLEDOWN.

But if in thy sweet pilfering
Thou feel her bosom thrill for me,
Leave off thy feast, and on swift wing
Bring the glad news, O bonny bee !

THISTLEDOWN.

O SWEET SOUTH WIND.

O SWEET South Wind, I saw you twist
Your fingers in her soft brown hair—
My eyes were on you when you kissed
Her ruddy lips and all the rare
Round loveliness of cheek and chin,
And Envy twitched me then and there.

For O, South Wind, if I had been
So close beside and she so fair,
Methinks I might have peeped within
Her heart to mark me if she wear
My name upon the naughty list
Of those she destines to Despair.

THISTLEDOWN.

COMMENT CHOISIR?

AS she loitered by the roadside
Where the sweet-briar grows,
Betty plucked for her adorning
One pale, pinky rose.

In her shining hair she placed it
With a careless grace,
Where it drooped and nodded slyly
Till it touched her face.

And the burly bees approaching
Hidden sweets to seek,
Could not choose between two roses—
One was Betty's cheek.





THISTLEDOWN.

AT SEA.

I LAUNCHED my boat, my little boat,
With sails of gold and blue,
Out on the sea whose mighty depth
And breadth I never knew.

I watched it drift far out of sight
With all the precious hoard
Of love and peace and trust and joy
That I for years had stored.

I waited by the water-side
For many a summer's day
To meet and greet on its return
The boat I sent away.

THISTLEDOWN.

But though the West is flecked with sails,
And ships float up the bay,
White-winged and laden with more wealth
Than e'er they took away;

And though my eyes are dim with tears,
And all my hope is gone,
Still here upon the dreary shore
I watch and wait alone—

For my little boat, my pretty boat,
With sails of gold and blue,
Still wanders on the wide, wide sea
Whose breadth I never knew.

MAID PHILLIS.

MAID Phillis twined her yellow hair
With gay gold daffodillies,
And dropped a curtsey where she stood
Among the meadow lilies.

“ Marry, good sir,” she cried to me,
“ And mind you in your straying,
Lest mischief trip you by the heels—
For Love is out a-Maying.

“ An hour ago he went this way,
And look how he bewitched me—
He pulled me here, he pulled me there,
And by the kirtle twitched me.

THISTLEDOWN.

“ See, here’s the rent the urchin made
In this my gown of scarlet!
I’faith, I would I had him here—
The saucy, smooth-tongued varlet!”

So she bewailed with tearful sighs,
And bade me heed her warning,
And so I hied me on my road,
All on a sweet May morning.

But when I reached the king’s highway
And looked where first I spied her,
Lo! Phillis sat and sewed her gown,
With Love curled up beside her!



THISTLEDOWN.

A RONDO OF YE HIE WYNDE.

(After Herrick.)

YE Wanton Wynde, yt Biteth Colde,
Inne most Unseemlie Sporte & Bolde,
Dothe Lifte A greavous Dust yt Flyes
Inne Mistresse Marjorie her Eyes
Soe She maie nott ye Pathe Beholde.

Yett inne ye Waie yt windinge Lyes
Ye Gallant sorelie Tryed likewyse,
Wth Peevish Wordes wolde Gibe & Scolde,
Ye Wanton Wynde.

THISTLEDOWN.

Ye Frolick Breeze ys Pligte Espyes
& dothe A naughtie Pranke Devyse;
& Mistresse Marjorie is Rolled
Into ye Gallant's Claspe & Folde,
Wheyre She alle Redde Berates wth Sighes
Ye Wanton Wynde.

VÆ VICTIS.

HE hummed beneath her breath and dreamily
 Gay bits of ballad and romance,
And, where her cheek just rounded creamily,
 A lurking dimple peeped askance.

She swayed a fluffy fan provokingly
 Before the mischief of her eyes,
And bade me recollect, half jokingly,
 Who tilts with Love Love-conquered dies.

She said farewell, and said it pettishly,
 Yet viewed my broken heart with pride,
And whispered to the end, coquettishly—
 “Love’s fickle—and the world is wide.”

THISTLEDOWN.

BALLADE OF MILADI.

She came, and the roses that lay on her breast
Were ruddy and rich and sweet at the core,
As they rose and fell in a tangled nest
Of the lace on the Paris gown she wore;
And the gleam of its satin curled white on the floor
Through the Court Quadrille, and a fragrance blew
From a fan that a broidered legend bore—
“L’Amour fait beaucoup, mais l’Argent fait tout.”

And lightly a tremulous pink caressed
The clear pale curve of her cheek as o'er
The rhythmic throb of the music's zest
Crept the sound of an earnest voice and swore



THISTLEDOWN.

A love that was life to her life—and more ;
But the fan still fluttered its gay frou-frou,
And flaunted its warning of gold-wrought lore—
“*L'Amour fait beaucoup, mais l'Argent fait tout.*”

Ah, then was Miladi put to her test !
And she, who had broken hearts by the score,
Drooped lower the dusk of her lashes lest
Her eyes should betray the passion that tore
Through her turbulent thoughts ; but yet as before
She laughed till Love was Despair as she flew
Her fan with its cynical screed of yore—
“*L'Amour fait beaucoup, mais l'Argent fait tout.*”

THISTLEDOWN.

ENVOI.

What though Miladi may sometimes deplore
 Her *mauvais quart d'heure*, as all of us do?
Is not she the Duchess of St. Dinore?
 “*L'Amour fait beaucoup, mais l'Argent fait tout!*”

THISTLEDOWN.

TO BETTY.

(Villanelle.)

WHEN Betty's dimples come and go,
And laughter loiters in her eyes,
Who cares which way the wind may blow?

For Cupid's sweet self is fain to strew
His way with quaint enamored sighs
When Betty's dimples come and go,

And watching Beauty's piquant show,
Youth, puffed with bold presuming, cries :
"Who cares which way the wind may blow?"

THISTLEDOWN.

Enchanted Age becomes a beau,

And pays his court with new emprise

When Betty's dimples come and go,

While Wisdom, if she but bestow

One smile, in needless haste replies :

“ Who cares which way the wind may blow ? ”

But who is wise ? And who can know

That Cruelty puts on disguise

When Betty's dimples come and go ?

Who cares which way the wind may blow ?

THISTLEDOWN

SERENADE.

O HAPPY stars that lean all night
Down from the stretch of purple skies,
To keep my Heart's Beloved in sight,
Where deep in maiden dreams she lies—
Her dear hands folded in a prayer,
And Sleep's dull touch upon her eyes.

Shine out, and shed your hallowed light
Around her rest in watchful wise,
Till in the distant East the bright
Gold radiance of the dawn shall rise
To bring her forth, that earth may wear
Once more the joys of Paradise!

THISTLEDOWN.

RONDEAUX.

IN gay rondeaux the poet sends
Blithe messages to absent friends,
Twisting his jest and quaint conceit
Till in a deftly-measured beat
His merriment with music blends.

The lover eagerly expends
The skill that vivid passion lends
To frame the vows his lips repeat
In gay rondeaux.

Ah me! I would that those who greet
These bits of verse as indiscreet,

THISTLEDOWN.

Could know that genius which pretends
To loftier lyrics often ends
With matching rhymes and moulding feet
In gay rondeaux.

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